THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) the total Optic Fibre Cable Network in the country is approx 1,83,032 Rkms out of which 1,77,172 Rkms belongs to DOT, 2921 1,83,032 Rkms to Railway and 2939 Rkms to Power Grid Corporation. In Addition, Optical Fibre Networks have been commissioned by some private telecom operators in their operating areas.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir, DOT has a plan to add 1,00,000 Kms to this Optic Fibre Network during the year 2000-2001.

BI-Monthly Billing System

193. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the earlier system of bi-monthly billing was convenient to the customers and was widely popular;

(b) if so, the reason for converting it to monthly system of billing;

(c) whether it is a fact that monthly billing system causes inconvenience and time consuming for payments;

(d) what steps are being taken to reintroduce bi-monthly billing system; and

(e) if so, by when it will be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) The system of bi-monthly billing has not been done away with, however, field units have been given flexibility to issue monthly bills in favour of high calling subscribers for making convenient to them to pay the bills and also to ensure early recovery of large amounts of public money.

(c) No, Sir. No instance of a complaint on this ground has come to notice.

(d) and (e) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Privatisation of Internationl Call Segments

194. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering privatisation of International Call segments;